

Fate

Story: Fate

Storylink: <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/9573362/1/>

Category: Golden Sun

Genre: Adventure/Angst

Author: Droory

Authorlink: <https://www.fanfiction.net/u/4163663/>

Last updated: 08/30/2013

Words: 13752

Rating: T

Status: In Progress

Content: Chapter 1 to 2 of 2 chapters

Source: FanFiction.net

Summary: Feizhi believed her trip to Champa to be for Isaac. She was not aware that fate had so much more planned for her, that it would thrust her into a broken group of three Adepts in need of a Jupiter Adept, who were intent on saving the world.

***Chapter 1*: Chapter 1**

***Well, here's that project I mentioned!
What I think is the first multi-chaptered
GoldenRingShipping Fic. If I'm wrong do tell me.
Let's get to it!***

The vision guided her, the same vision she saw every night, the bright and powerful auras in the town of sea and spray, the same auras as *them*. She kept the vision alive during her waking moments, using her Chi... no her Psynergy, as a guide through the mountains she had to traverse. She didn't know why, but she knew south-west was the direction her vision directed her in.

She felt incredibly futile. She had abandoned Xian, Master Feh, Lama Temple, Master Hama, and Hsu, for this silly prophecy. It told her to move forward, to go to this place beyond the mountains. She brought her little trinket with her as incentive... reasoning... something to hold her resolve as she hiked for days through the harsh mountainous surroundings of her homeland.

The little golden bracelet, imbued with ancient properties she did not fully understand, was a present for a man meant to save the world. A man, who reached far beyond anything she could hope to accomplish in life, and even further out of her grasp in the romantic world. Still... just to know the gift may keep him safe, offer him protection through the perilous dangers she had seen he would face on those few moments around him, would make it worth it.

Still... Feizhi had to question why her visions told her to go to this place with such force and tenacity that it seemed

fated. That if she did not follow this idle quest as a deliverer the world would be fated to end. Perhaps she just made her vision so insistent so as to see him again, maybe she was exaggerating it and her own worth to grasp a bit of understanding in the life he faced.

She was still so interested by him. Such an insignificant time spent near him and such an impression remaining afterwards. There was no way to describe it. She had seen so much in his essence from the very first moment. The power within him and the endless potential he had to make whatever he wished a possibility. She knew, from first sight, that he was a man of destiny, a man fated to change the course of all lives. Yet, he was not one to know it. To him, he was going to save a friend, she had read that off of him. There was so much to him, so much mystery, that it haunted her, he was as young as her and he was already thrust into such a fate... yet he faced it with a smile, a nod, and a shake of the head.

That was all she had got out of him. She had asked if he was a strong warrior, he had shaken his head. She found it odd of a warrior to call himself weak... yet, she now realised the strength behind that answer. He had been so focused that he had no time to communicate, his companions did more than enough for all of them. He just got to it, helped, and moved on, out of her life before she could properly thank him, wish him luck on the future she had seen he would face, or offer him something to protect him. Maybe if she could give this small present to him, her vision would stop... it would show her a newer future, something else to work for.

Feizhi stopped as she reached a spring along the mountain trail. There didn't seem to be any beasts around so she allowed herself time to relax and take pause. She needed time to rest, to meditate and clear her mind. Setting down

her pack she went to the small pool that was the spring and kneeled by it. Scooping her hands into the water, she pooled up enough to drink. The fresh water ran through her body and along her chin as she drank, thankful for it. She had been without water for several hours now.

Sighing, thankful, as she reached for her empty canteen to fill it, she caught her reflection in the water surface. She blinked and looked herself over. She was filthy. She supposed it wasn't odd... but she wasn't accustomed to it. She had been travelling for several weeks now, the mountains proving difficult to navigate through, and she often came across some monster looking to feed.

Stripping down to her undergarments, Feizhi, splashing the refreshing spring water against her and wiping away whatever dirt she could with a spare cloth, did her best to clean herself off. Not entirely satisfied, but accepting that she couldn't fully clean herself here, Feizhi towelled off and redressed into her purple and green travelling garbs. They were her kung-fu training clothes and served perfectly for the hike. Plus, she often needed to fight off something, so having them helped, better than wearing something more constrictive.

Sitting down once dressed, Feizhi looked herself over in the pool again. Mostly clean now, she admired her reflection. Her vibrant green eyes rippled as they looked over her heart shaped-face. She blinked and brushed a lock or two of her long violet hair behind her ear. She smiled and assumed her meditation position, crossing her legs and resting her arms delicately against themselves as she closed her eyes.

Allowing deep cleansing breath to flow through her form, her mind became blank unfocused as she entered a state of peace and calm. Unthinking, her clairvoyance came to the

forefront of her mind, and, as with every night the prophecy she foresaw returned. But something was different... it was clearer now. She could see the cliff face that the town she travelled to was set in... the waterfall that tumbled through, and the river leading to the ocean filled with the many ships, trawlers and fishing boats of the people there. The water sparkled and shone in the reflected light of the sun.

At the entrance, the yellow light who was Isaac became clearer. Then, it was different... at its heart, where the light should have been strongest, was a tainted darkness. It was slowly spreading outward, rooting itself into the pure light like a cancer. Surrounding it were three other auras, just as before, the fiery, the inquisitive, and the calm.

Feizhi opened her eyes, panting profusely. That was the clearest, yet vaguest, premonition she had ever received. She had no idea what it meant, but it seemed as though something had happened to Isaac. Perhaps the vision led her to help him... or to remind him of something... protect him... something. All her other visions gave her clear evidence of what would happen, the corruption of Mogall, the floods in Altin after the blue light to the north, the rock slide trapping Hsu, and the great quakes that followed the yellow light to the south... but this... this told her nothing.

She knew she had to get moving, a rest was fine for her, but Isaac and his friends would not wait for her to rest. As quickly as she had reached this place, she was packed and gone, following the rough directions her prophecy provided her, continuing over the mountains and to the south-west. Worry coursing through her form as she clambered through the rocky landscape.

It took a few weeks more for Feizhi to make it over the mountains and back down to the soft land she was accustomed to. The sea stretched out to the south, hiding everything in its mysterious blue cover, allowing the sun to sparkle upon its surface. She smiled, panting slightly having just fought off a minotaur, and took a seat on a small rock on the beach she had reached.

She was exhausted, she hadn't eaten in several days, and took to scanning the surroundings. She had run out of food a short while ago and hadn't found anything edible during her time in the mountains. Hoping to find a tree with some succulent fruits, or perhaps a kind stranger willing to share some provisions, Feizhi kept her eyes moving around her. She found nothing, nothing she trusted anyway, she was unsure of the fungus growing near to her. A growl from her stomach informed her to disregard that unease and sate herself, but she ignored it, standing up and walking again to distract herself with action.

Within an hour she saw a large regal ship pull up to the beach far ahead of her, scrutinising it she looked to the cliffs and found the town she travelled toward was not far from where she was. This realisation brought another, perhaps that ship was Isaac's, which meant she had succeeded in catching up to him.

Breaking into a sprint, Feizhi ran to the town, ignoring the protests from her tired and bruised body. She saw four bodies far ahead of her, moving swiftly toward the town in question, from this distance she could not define anything, not even the auras she had seen every night for the past months, but it had to be them, it had to be.

She wasn't sure how long it had taken before she crossed the threshold of the town entrance, panting and aching all

over, but she was there at last. Quickly scanning around for Isaac or his friends, she saw the familiar auras several feet ahead of her, they must have just gotten here.

"Isaac? Isaac?" She panted out, her voice tired and strained from lack of use and exhaustion.

The people up ahead took notice of her calls and turned to look at her. The one with the yellow aura, turned back quickly, shaking his head to the others as he continued. Another spoke up, despite the unspoken command.

"Excuse me, miss? Are you looking for a man by the name of Isaac?" An elderly man stepped closer to her, revealing himself to be older than even her father.

"Isaac! Yes. Do you know Isaac, old man? Is Isaac with you?" Feizhi pressed, looking at the group the man had stepped out from, there were only three others... so this was not Isaac's group. Perhaps she had missed them, or hopefully she had just arrived before them.

"Yes, I know Isaac. I am Kraden, a friend of his. How do you know him?" The man named Kraden asked.

"Isaac helped me and Hsu. He is a good man. Do you know where Isaac is?" Feizhi asked quickly, hoping to find some reason why her visions brought her here if this was the group she was to meet.

"I'm afraid I'm not sure, though we have heard stories of him being around. If I may ask, how did you come to be here asking for him?" The man asked. The others of his group had begun to step closer, all except the aura that resembled Isaac's. He remained up ahead, impatiently waiting for his insubordinate followers.

Feizhi was growing irritated by this old man and his questions, if he did not know where Isaac was he was of no help, but he knew Isaac, so perhaps he could help, *"Master Hama tells me I am an Adept. I have visions. I have followed them. My vision told me Isaac would be here."*

The three around her seemed to become immensely more interested at the mention of the word Adept, the old man, Kraden, stepping closer yet again, *"Did you say you were an Adept? Of which element? Did this Master Hama tell you? What powers do you have?"*

Feizhi furrowed her brow at this, *"I do not understand you, old man. Master Hama told me that Jupiter can see things others cannot. Is that what you mean?"*

The three surrounding her seemed to become ecstatic at this knowledge, the old man nodding joyously along, *"Yes, my dear, that is exactly what I mean. Master Hama told you that you were a Jupiter Adept, or maybe she said Wind? You can sometimes influence the winds or clouds, yes?"*

"Yes. What do y-"

"Felix, Felix, come here quickly! You must meet this young lady. She says she is a Jupiter Adept!" Kraden exclaimed hurriedly, moving to drag the one named Felix closer to her.

Feizhi shuddered as this 'Felix' was brought closer. He exuded such an imposing, frightening aura. His face was entirely hidden from sight by an intricately carved mask, even his eyes were hidden behind black screens. She could see nothing of him, except to know that she should be wary of this one.

"Felix this is... oh, I'm sorry, miss, it seems we have not been properly introduced." Kraden said quickly, *"I am*

Kraden. This is Felix," he said, gesturing to the masked man, *"Jenna,"* he nodded to a scarlet-haired girl who nodded to her, *"and, Piers."* The blue-haired man bowed low, greeting her in a deep tone.

"I do not care, old man." Feizhi retorted, tired of all of this, *"I am looking for Isaac. If you do not know where Isaac is leave me alone."* She snapped, making to walk away from them, hoping to find something to eat or maybe even Isaac himself.

"We could bring you to Isaac." Kraden's voice said loudly as she turned away.

Feizhi stopped in her tracks.

"Kraden!" Felix snapped loudly, grabbing the scholar's collar harshly. Immediately Piers had his hand firmly upon Felix's, his yellow eyes piercing through the black eyes of his mask. Felix shrugged the Lemurian off and released Kraden.

The aged scholar looked as though death had just gripped him, and if not for Piers that wouldn't have been far from the truth, *"F-forgive me, Felix."* Kraden stammered quietly, avoiding the mask staring down at him, *"But... but we do need a Jupiter Adept... we need her."*

"No." Felix answered harshly, sick of the old man's interference. He had tried on several occasions to recruit Jupiter Adepts, *"Atteka will have a Jupiter Adept somewhere. We will use them, and once we've lit the Beacon we shall send them back."*

"You're beginning to sound like Saturos..." Jenna whispered to herself.

Felix however, caught this insult and took it to heart, *"Hold your tongue, Jenna."*

"Lest you cut it out?" She snapped back, tears forming in her eyes, *"Now you do sound like Saturos!"*

Felix's fists quickly clenched tightly with the great effort to not respond to that insult physically. Once again, Piers was between the two of them, staring Felix down silently, *"I suggest you listen to your sister and Kraden, Felix. There is no guarantee we would find a Jupiter Adept, and it is great luck we have found one, one who appears to have battle experience. She should be able to look after herself, since you shall not."*

"It is not my place to look after you!" Felix retorted, *"And we are not taking her with us!"*

Jenna reached forward, taking her brother's arm into her hand, *"Please, Felix... we need her... for Mom... Dad..."*

Behind his mask, Felix felt the sickly feeling of wetness in his eyes, and he growled as he saw the same in his sister's, *"Fine, drag another poor soul into this!"* Felix responded harshly, yanking his arm from his sister's grip and started for the town's inn, *"You three are responsible for her, not I."*

Kraden breathed a deep, grateful sigh as Felix left their proximity and offered a weak smile to his compatriots. Piers returned it with a nod, but Jenna was not so receptive, she watched her brother walk off, feeling his pain.

"Jenna, perhaps you should try and rest," Piers suggested, gesturing to the purple haired girl who was still waiting curiously several feet away, *"I shall talk with the young miss about our quest."*

Jenna looked up at her friend, gazing into his golden eyes, seeing them return kindness and support, and she nodded, feeling comforted. Exhaling slowly, she smiled to him, and walked deeper into the town with Kraden.

Feizhi stood, her eyes narrowing as she watched the exchange between the group. Though she could only pick up snippets of the conversation between them, she could tell she was clearly not wanted by the masked one, but the others seemed rather eager for her to accompany them. She was unsure of what to do. Surely a group of such strained and incapable alliances was not a strong one, one that could not survive. Yet, they had said that they would cross paths with Isaac. Perhaps that was the price.

Before long, the masked one, Felix, broke off from the group, declaring his distaste for the union they sought to create with her, but conceding to their requests. The blue-haired man began to stride toward her as the others followed after their leader, his bright yellow eyes meeting hers, *"You may accompany us if you wish."* He said simply, but kindly.

"You and your friends will meet Isaac?" Feizhi questioned.

The man nodded, *"I believe so. Isaac is following us, in a sense. No doubt we shall meet with he and his party before long."*

His words gave Feizhi some pause, why would Isaac be following these people? *"Where are you going? Why does Isaac follow you?"*

"That..." He paused in his answer, looking over his shoulder, *"is a long story. However, our methods may differ, but we and Isaac have similar goals. We believe the world is in*

danger and we are trying to save it, though if I understand, Isaac believes we seek to destroy it."

"I do not understand." Feizhi shook her head, trying to make sense of the words.

He sighed, *"I do not expect you to. Do you know of the Elemental Lighthouses? Perhaps you have seen bright lights in the skies, blue and yellow?"*

Feizhi nodded fervently at the mention of those lights, she had seen them in both her vision and the days they had been proven true, *"Yes. I have. I do not know of the Lighthouses."*

The man nodded, gesturing that they should proceed deeper into the town. As they walked he took a deep breath, clearly enjoying the air of this seafaring town, before he continued his explanation to her, *"This could be confusing... but, those lights were Beacons atop the Lighthouses that Felix ignited. Each Beacon controls the powers of the elements, strengthens them when they are lit, and gives life to our world. The Beacons of Mercury and Venus have been lit, or water and earth if you prefer. Adepts of these elements now feel stronger, more in touch with their power than they have in eons. We need to light the remaining two Lighthouses, Jupiter, for wind, and Mars, for fire."*

"Why?" Feizhi asked quietly, mesmerised by Piers' voice as he spoke. This was like a story a mother would tell their child as they went to sleep. She was captivated in it, needing to know the end, what part she would play, and how they would all influence the story and what Isaac would do in it.

"Our world needs the powers of the elements to sustain itself. Our world is alive, the elements nourish it, keep it fed in a sense. However, there is a... problem with that. As I

said, Adepts grow stronger as the Beacons are lit. In the ancient past, this caused great wars and nearly brought about the end of the world." He paused again, considering how best to finish his tale in a light that showed he, his friends, and Isaac in a positive light, *"Isaac and his group fear this is what may happen if we succeed, but they do not know the world is dying in its current state. It is a... precarious argument we lead."*

"You would fight Isaac?" Feizhi said, her voice growing louder upon each word, *"He seeks the same as you. Tell him and become allies."*

"It is not that simple, I'm afraid and I apologise for that." Piers sighed as they reached the inn, sitting at a vacant table, *"Isaac and a friend who travels with him, hail from Vale. There they were taught that lighting the Beacons and returning the ancient powers to the world was an unforgivable sin. They would not so easily discard their beliefs, and even less likely to believe us without true proof of what we say. So for now, we race them to each Lighthouse, hoping to outrun them."*

Feizhi cast her gaze down, conflicted, and took to staring at the knots in the wood of the table, oblivious to the sound of her stomach or another presence that came and went. These people want to save the world, or so they say, and Isaac wants to save the world. Why was it difficult? They could just explain. Surely, Isaac's people would forgive them, if it was to save the world then it would be worth it. Wars and abuse could be prevented. The end Piers had told her of could not. If he told the truth, but what purpose would he have to lie to her? Why did they actually need her?

Feizhi glanced up, her focus returning, to ask these very questions, only to be greeted by Piers' kindly smile and a

small meal before her. She blinked twice, staring incredulously at the fish upon what must have been her plate.

"I heard your stomach growling. Your travels must have been difficult, so, I'm sure a meal would not go astray." He explained simply, "I'm afraid that us being here, if we are recognised, will result in some rather hostile reactions. I assume you know how to defend yourself?"

Feizhi nodded her thanks and her answer as she hungrily wolfed down the meal before her. It may not have been anything overly impressive, but to her right now, it was a banquet. Piers, smirking to himself as she answered without breaking for air in between her bites, lifted his sword and gestured to her questioningly. Scrutinising the gesture for a moment, Feizhi smirked and pointed to each of her palms and clenched them into fists.

Piers seemed impressed by that, nodding slowly with a growing grin. Quickly though, this disappeared and he stood up, just as Feizhi had taken the last bite of her meal. Questioning, Feizhi glanced around to find Felix standing behind her, arms crossed. Feizhi choked on the bit of food in her mouth momentarily, before forcibly swallowing it, gasping slightly as her windpipe cleared again.

Staring at her new companion on her new quest she attempted to size him up, knowing he was doing the very same. She could get nothing though. He was taller than her, by at least a foot, his shadow perpetually over her. Even through the fabrics of his travelling tunic she could sense the toned body beneath, sculpted from constant difficulty and battles, no doubt there were many scars. Perhaps that was why his face was hidden behind his mask.

The mask was beautiful, which was a shame. It was simple in design, a single curved surface to hide all defining features beneath. It was painted brightly, splendorous colours that curved to its centre. The assortment of colour and vibrancy made the mask rather menacing, as opposed to its possibility of being a piece of art. They were striking, Feizhi imagined them charging her as she stared into it. She imagined that was its main purpose now while it concealed this dark man's face entirely. Even the eyes of the mask had been covered by black screens which were impossible to see through.

She slowly rose from her seat, doing her best to remain composed in front of him before reaching her hand forward, *"Hello."* She said plainly, doing all she could to keep her voice steady in this man's presence.

Felix didn't move an inch in response to this gesture, the mask continued to just stare at her. A grunt echoed from behind the mask, it sounded amused, *"Piers, we'll continue our search for Briggs now. Words from the townsfolk tell that his grandmother is a skilled smith, perhaps she will understand more of the Ankohl fragments that we have found. That, and Briggs must pay for his crimes."*

Feizhi dropped her hand, refusing the urge to scowl or bite her lip in frustration to Felix's lack of manners. Piers nodded to Felix's words, whose meaning escaped the purple-haired girl, *"By pay, you do of course mean return all he has stolen and serve time, correct?"*

Feizhi noted Felix's hand grip the handle of his blade tighter for a moment, before allowing it to slack again, *"We shall see."*

The group, now five strong, were climbing through the cave system in which much of the seafaring town was situated. Despite the seasonal warmth the town was experiencing outside, the caves were surprisingly temperate.

As they climbed Feizhi drew closer to Piers again, who was leading up the back as Felix and his sister pressed on ahead, "*Piers?*" She spoke softly, realising this was the first time she had said any name other than Isaac for several months.

The Lemurian, turned his head slightly, catching the girl in the periphery of his vision with his topaz eyes, "*Yes?*"

"What are we doing?" She questioned as she ascended another flight of stairs, being thrown suspicious and wary glares from the natives as they progressed further up.

Piers sighed deeply, *"We are apprehending a pirate named Briggs. This man stole from many towns and was responsible for me being imprisoned for sometime. Along with this, we are searching for someone who may know any more about pieces of a weapon we have found. There are stories that tell us we will need it on our quest."*

Feizhi was deeply confused, not by what the others were doing or why she had decided to help them in it when she could have remained a simple traveller with them, but by why Felix was doing something so noble. He did not seem the type to care for justice, or to want to bring criminals in, he seemed more the type to *be* a criminal and cause trouble, like those loathsome thugs who had gone through Silk Road and nearly killed Hsu.

"Feizhi, if I may ask, what Psynergy powers do you possess? I have never met a Jupiter Adept before."

The green eyed girl glanced upward from the ground which she had been watching to find Piers scrutinising her, *"I do not know. I use Chi in battle. It concentrates the body's energy into a force. Master Hama says Psynergy is power of the mind. I am unsure of how to use it in battle."*

"Interesting," Piers noted as they entered a particularly well lit section of the cave, presumably the highest level in which they might find Briggs or the smith Felix had told him of, *"but the visions you spoke of, they are Psynergy, correct?"*

Feizhi nodded as voices came into earshot from deeper in the cave, *"Yes. Master Hama gave me that ability. I cannot control it. Visions come to me and are always fulfilled."*

Piers absorbed this information, although he found it odd that this *'Master Hama'* was capable of bestowing Psynergy onto another without the use of a Psynergetic object like the Burst Brooch they had found in Tundaria Tower. It was too bad this master could not teach Feizhi more of her new abilities before she set off on her quest, *"When we are finished here, I shall try my best to help you come to grips with your new Psynergies."*

"Thank you, Pi-"

Shouting from up ahead rang through the caves, echoing down the hallways. As the two glanced forward they found that Felix, Jenna, and Kraden were now gone. Nodding to each other quickly as Piers unsheathed his sword, the two charged forward in search of their companions. Thankfully, they had reached a rather straightforward section of the cave and had found them in a large chamber within seconds.

The room was burning bright with fires being conjured from a hole at the far end of the room. Alongside it were Briggs

and an elderly woman who Piers presume to be the smith and grandmother of the same pirate. Felix and Jenna had their weapons primed and the tell-tale blue glow of their Psynesergetic shields were already enclosed around them. Feizhi and Piers took positions alongside as the old woman called on some beast, and from the fiery pit jumped a large red lizard, spitting flames and violently thrashing its tail around behind it.

The four dived in whatever direction best suited as the lizard spewed flame at them as soon as it emerged. The monster followed after Felix and Jenna who had dove to the right allowing Piers and Feizhi time to attack. Feizhi charged forward, focusing on her momentum and the energy she was gathering, but Piers stayed back, pacing slowly around the beast. Feizhi struck the beast right in its side, no doubt contacting a rib or two, the force of her punch amplified by the strength of her Chi. The techniques were meant to strike distant enemies, but when applied directly the damage was much greater.

She was suitably surprised then, when the beast did not topple as so many others had, it simply took the blow and swung its tail at her. Feizhi was given little time to react and braced herself for the attack, she wasn't unaccustomed to pain, having trained with Master Feh's punishing techniques so often. However, before the tail impacted an orb of ice smashed into the advancing appendage, breaking its swing before several others crashed into it.

Feizhi glanced around to find Piers surrounded by silvery-blue rings of energy so like the ones she had seen surround Isaac when he had saved Hsu from beneath the boulder. She quickly put distance between herself and the beast, understanding now that direct assault was not an option

with this foe. Sadly, the lizard was greatly angered by Piers' assault, and pounced around to assault.

The beast was on top of Piers within a moment, slashing its claws downward in an attempt to cut the man beneath it. Feizhi charged forward again to do whatever she could for him before a large spire erupted from the ground, flipping the beast up on off of her blue-haired friend. Again, Feizhi was forced to marvel at this seemingly impossible occurrence, but she had little time, as a quick beam of heat soared past her and into the beast, unbalancing it further. Piers was out from beneath it and had replaced himself with large icicle jutting from the ground.

The monster roared in pain, swinging its tail beneath it and breathing flame upward and around the room. Within moments the room was heavy with heat and gathering smoke from the beast's attacks. It was becoming increasingly difficult as time passed to navigate the thickening blackness and heat. The group continued to fight on, succeeding in dealing some injuries to the beast but it had done the same to them in return.

Feizhi charged toward where she had last seen the monster, her eyes stinging from the gathering smoke. She found it rather quickly and landed some deft blows to its hind leg, but was kicked away fiercely, slamming into the wall as she bled from the cuts the claws had torn into her. She clutched the tears in her skin carefully as the smoke was filled with lights of her companions' attacks. Despite all of her training these three were much more suited to battle. Her attacks did little to faze the beast, while Piers' ice seemed to greatly weaken it, but Jenna's did little as well.

At the thought, the crimson haired girl was crouched beside Feizhi. She pressed her hands over the cuts across her

midriff, her body surrounded with active Psynergy. Golden sparks gathered around and settled into the cuts, filling Feizhi with the most delightful warmth, and soon the cuts were not more than faint scars. Feizhi's mind could barely comprehend the miracles these warriors could work. Normally a wound like hers would have taken days to heal fully. She wished she could have seen more of Isaac and his friends perform such feats.

Feizhi found that standing up was a mistake, the smoke had become so thick that it was becoming impossible to breathe. Clearly this beast cared not for the master who had summoned it, and was only concerned for fending off the intruders it was called to fight. She coughed, crouching low, but that proved to be of little use. She tried to concentrate hard at defeating the beast, but the smoke was invading her thoughts.

She punched forward, hoping for her Chi to hit the monster, but it proved useless. Her body's energy was being invaded by the heavy, black, air of the room. She took as deep a breath as would be healthy, focusing again, she needed to be rid of this smoke. The noises of battle had quieted, but she could still hear the pained grunts of the weakened monster, obviously the others were having as much difficulty as she was in this invasive environment.

She struggled to hold onto her focus as she shambled through the smoke, hoping to find another. Within a second she was face to face with the sickly, bloody, visage of the orange scaled lizard. She heard it gather its breath, consuming much of the remaining oxygen around them as it prepared to ignite it upon her. Feizhi shrieked, her mind flaring into hopes of surviving and defending herself.

She pushed forward, hoping to get some distance between herself and the monster, but as she did light enveloped her, the same silvery glow that had surround those fighting with her, and purple blades twice the size of the lizard slashed forward cutting into the beast and knocking him away. As they did, they absorbed much of the smoke around them, cleaning the air as they impacted the beast's hide. As the last struck the beast was knocked off balance, rolling onto its back. Before it could recover, a large golden sword of pure energy tore through the room and the beast before exploding within the body it had just impaled.

The room suddenly brightened as the pit the beast had emerged from glowed and sucked in all of the smoke it had produced in battle. The mangled corpse of the monster remained for a moment before breaking up and dissolved into faintly glowing purple flecks. The floating remnants of the beast approached the four fighters and melded to their form. As they did, Feizhi felt stronger, glowing strongly for a moment, realising something had changed within her.

She glanced around, the same effect had not been achieved with the others, despite the same happening to them. Feizhi breathed deeply, becoming more confused, but no doubt she would have it explained to her by Piers sometime.

The four warriors gathered on one side of the pit, angrily staring down the woman and her grandson who had just tried to kill them.

"Feizhi, you were amazing!" Jenna exclaimed as they exited the cave system after a lengthy discussion with Obaba about her grandson's misdeeds and the trident of Ankohl. They had been glad to learn that Obaba knew much of the Ankohl society and where to find the remaining fragment.

Kraden theorised that the towers she had spoken of would require a visit to more Elemental Rocks, as Tundaria Tower had needed what Piers' had learned in Aqua Rock and the Ankohl Ruins had needed Gaia's Sand Psynergy.

Feizhi shook her head slightly, not believing Jenna's kind words, but was flattered nonetheless, *"No. You were amazing. Making fire from nothing. Healing wounds in seconds. That is amazing."*

Jenna and Piers laughed a little, *"Nah, not amazing."* Jenna commented back, *"Psynergy! Just like yours. Those purple blade things were pretty cool you know."*

"Agreed." Piers commented, patting Feizhi on the back, *"Very well done. Seems you are more capable with Psynergy than we thought."*

"It was an accident." Feizhi responded. She wasn't even sure how she had done it, or if *she* had even done it. It seemed like her mind responded violently to the danger before her and acted. She hadn't been in control of whatever Psynergy she had managed to conjure.

"Accident or no, skills like that will help us greatly on our quest. Plus, I did promise to teach you how to gain more proper control." Piers answered, smiling kindly, as Jenna nodded her approval. She seemed so much brighter than she had before the battle.

"Well, well, well, what have we here?"

The four Feizhi had joined stopped suddenly, causing her to glance around cautiously. Their gazes were all fixed on something back toward the town. She stepped forward a bit to find a blue-haired man approaching them, smiling easily.

"Alex, what the hell do you want?" Jenna spat, her Psynergy boiling within her.

Alex held his hand up to his chest, *"Oh, Jenna, such hostility wounds me. Even more so that you have me replaced, and with such a novice Mercury Adept no less."* Alex's eyes lit up as they fell upon Feizhi, *"Oh, and you've replaced dear Sh-"*

"Don't dare speak her name." Felix's harsh voice cut across.

Alex bowed slightly, *"As you wish, Felix. However, relating back to Jenna's crudely worded question. I am here to make sure you have not lost sight of the reason you are on this quest."*

"What makes you think we have?" Felix shot, his voice hot with rage.

"Your pointless adventuring!" A voice called from the hill to their right which lead to the graveyard.

The five pairs of eyes shot up to find the source. Though foreign to Feizhi's eyes, the pink skinned girl was recognised by her companions but none more so than Felix. The girl was smirking down at them from her perch above them, her finger delicately tracing along the curved blade of the scythe she carried. Her fiery red eyes locked right onto the black screens of Felix's mask.

"Karst." He stated gruffly, announcing her presence officially.

"So, you remember me this time. I'm flattered." She responded snidely, spinning her scythe into her other hand in one smooth flourish, *"But no time for that, lover."* The word was more mockery than anything else, *"We do believe you have forgotten why you're lighting the Beacons."*

"Because of your insistence to help every bug you find."
Another voice called from the dock to their left.

Again, all eyes switched to find the source, and this time it was recognised by only the ebony-haired leader. The man stood nearly seven feet tall, pale green and covered in rippling muscle which he openly flaunted to intimidate the young adventurers.

"Agatio too." Felix commented, completely uninterested in the white-haired Proxian, before turning back to Alex, which visibly angered Agatio, *"You feel the need to strong-arm us? I thought you may have been above that Alex."*

"All things require sacrifice." Alex replied, a smirk growing, *"As you've learned."* The words sparked a fire within Felix, who grasped the hilt of his blade tighter, but he was not so foolish as to attempt to rush Alex with Karst and Agatio flanking his sides, *"But, you've learned of the company I keep since you replaced me. And we shall always be near to put you back on the right course lest you stray from it."*

As he finished his sentence the two Proxians pushed closer to the group, Karst passing the blade dangerously close to the faces of each of them as she passed, a sinister smirk constantly present. Alex smiled as he watched the two leave before following soon after. He paused at the gates to the town for a moment, before turning to face the aged scholar of the group.

"Ah, yes, Kraden." His eyes were staring passively into Kraden's, *"You were on this quest at the request of Babi of Tolbi, no? It may interest you to know that time has finally caught up with him. He has passed, so your reasons for being in danger are now moot. Oh, and I assure you, we had nothing to do with it. We are above political assassination."*

Kraden's mouth dropped, no noise escaping as he attempted to form some word of disbelief. Alex simply smiled in return before leaving. Kraden shook his head, muttering to himself. Several minutes passed before the group was finally able to leave, after Kraden had assured them all he was okay, and that he wished to remain on the quest for his own reasons.

The five of them boarded Piers' Lemurian vessel and immediately set sail for Osenia where Air's Rock was situated.

***That's the first chapter!
What did you think?
I want people to throw theories at me!
Preps theory shield GO!
Review!***

***Your friend and writer.
Droory***

***...I should probably have updated other stories
before I uploaded this... ah well.***

***Chapter 2*: Chapter 2**

Chapter 2!

Thanks in advance for reading!

And, Guest, thanks so much for your review! I'd answer your questions, but I'd prefer to let you stew in them.

ONWARD!

Feizhi lurched again as the ship was knocked by a wave. It was nothing overly strange for the boat to encounter, but having spent her entire life having only seen glimmers of a ship in the distance, the purple-haired girl was not at all used to the sensations of being on board a seafaring vessel. She had told herself to go inside and stop watching the waves, to try and focus and meditate, but the waves were as mesmerising as they were nauseating as they sprayed froth about the ship.

She had been with the group for a week now as they sailed to the Elemental Rock that represented her element. In her time there, Piers had been her closest friend. He took the time to talk to her every day and ensure she was comfortable and settling okay. That and she often pestered him for lessons on Psynergy and the mysteries of the world that he had encountered. She found herself enraptured as he spun tales of delving into deep caverns and fighting off hordes of enemies

It had also taken a day or two for him to realise that they had some Jupiter Djinni shared between them, which were promptly given to her, though she already had such a companion, the extra strength and company was a welcome bonus. She was vastly interested in their abilities and effects

on an Adept. Piers had done his best to explain to her as his had for him. It seemed Breath had forgotten that when she first encountered her.

Most of her time on board the ship, apart from doing all she could to learn of the world and Adepts of which she was now a part, she spent her time training with Piers to gain a firmer grasp on her Psynergy. She still had not been able to recreate the attack that had ultimately resulted in the defeat of that lizard in Champa, but she had conjured a weaker version of it. Piers' words were confusing and often proved ineffective for her. After one session when she was particularly frustrated of being able to do, let alone master, a technique Piers spoke of, she had asked Jenna how to do it.

The girl was oblivious to this form of focus for Psynergy and was unable to produce any more than a small flame from her finger with it. Jenna had simply said that she was able to do things her own way and that Piers' ways just seemed odd to her. After overhearing this, Kraden put forth a theory that each Adept harnesses and releases their Psynergy through their own methods. Being taught one way did not necessarily mean it would work for a particular Adept.

Feizhi sighed at this knowledge, though learning from Piers was helpful, and she *was* learning, to have to grasp the full extent of her power alone seemed daunting. All her life she had other students or her father, or Master Hama to help teach her in whatever arts she studied, but to have to learn alone without any form of guide or way forward seemed nigh on impossible.

It wasn't all bad though, she had been teaching Piers and Jenna the art of Chi in return. They were not particularly fast learners, mostly because Feizhi's directions usually led them to the sort of thinking that would unleash Psynergy, but she

had no doubt that in time they would master the art if diligent enough.

All in all the ship was a rather homely place... but... only if Piers was present, which was less than half of the time. He may have been working on the lower decks or piloting, and everything changed without him around. Jenna became withdrawn and quiet, preferring to shy away from any questions, doing her best to avoid conversation. Similarly, Kraden invested extra effort into his studies, feigning being absorbed so as not to disturb anything.

This was not all of the time though, it could last from anywhere from a few minutes to an hour or two, but when Felix was amongst them it was constant and even Piers' presence did little to break the dull mood. The masked man seemed to bring the worst out in all of them, Feizhi felt particularly uncomfortable whenever he was near, primarily because he still refused to even acknowledge her existence. The most interest he showed in her was through the dark slots of his mask as they stared for a moment before turning away. What was he thinking as he stared?

"Feizhi?" Piers called over his shoulder from the wheel, *"Are you okay?"*

Feizhi swallowed twice, turning her eyes away from the frothy waves surrounding the ship and to the blue-haired captain. She took a few unsteady steps forward before breathing out in an attempt to calm her turbulent stomach and the dinner from earlier within, *"I am still unused to these sensations."* She responded simply.

The answer had Piers chuckle a little, *"Yes, Jenna had much the same problem for the first few trips. It will pass within a few days more, I'm sure."*

It didn't fill the girl with much confidence for overcoming this, but if Jenna could do it then she could as well. Slowly placing one foot in front of the other she edged closer to the bandanna wearing pilot as he guided the ship south. Feizhi glanced out at the horizon seeing nothing but sea or the faint outline of the land surrounding her, its beauty made her feel so small. Far to her west she could see a large yellow tower which Piers had identified as the Elemental Lighthouse of Venus, and far to the east was an expansive cloud of fog which Piers claimed was his home.

"Piers?" She asked hesitantly, this being one of the few moments in which it had just been the two of them alone, *"What is wrong with Felix?"* She had intended to ask the question since she first arrived, but there was always something to stall it. Be it Jenna, Feizhi not wanting to hurt or insult Felix's sister, Felix himself, monster attacks, or some other event.

Piers sighed heavily, his eyes dropping for a moment before he glanced back up at sea, exhaling deeply again. For a few moments he was silent and Feizhi might have asked the question again had she not seen the mind working behind his golden eyes.

"I do not know." He answered simply, before Feizhi asked another question he pressed on, not favouring this topic, *"He has been like this since I met him. He is cold and calculating, yes, but he is not without logic, compassion, or a sense of moral. I suspect something happened in his past, not long before I met him, and it has scarred him, his sister, and Kraden."* Piers sighed again, releasing the wheel for a moment as he combed both his hands over his head.

"I have asked all of them what has happened." He continued as he took hold of the controls again, *"Felix refuses to even*

pretend I asked it, Jenna shies away afraid to answer, though if she's afraid of the memory or of Felix himself is debateable, and Kraden is much the same, though he does say that it is not his answer to give. I suspect Felix is like he is now because whatever happened him shook him to his very core. A death of someone he cared about seems a strong possibility."

The cogs were working in Feizhi's mind, trying desperately to figure out what must have happened to them. Perhaps it was as Piers said, a death or some form of loss. That man, the blue haired one... Al... Ala... Ale... something, he had said that she was a replacement. Maybe he, or one of those ones with him, had killed one of their friends?

"I have tried to help, but my role seems to have fallen to keeping Felix from doing anything too extreme." Piers stated, seeming to loathe that fact, "It is a shame, because I have seen Felix is a good man, and it pains me to see him hurt and that I have to defend the others from him at times."

Feizhi frowned, mulling over this information. Perhaps Felix was just hurt. Maybe he did not want it to happen again, whatever 'it' was. Maybe he could be a normal person beneath it all, behind that mask. She didn't think it possible, truly. Of the brief time she had seen of him on the ship, since he spent the majority of it alone in his room, she did not think he was ever normal, not in the past few years at least. The savagery he assaulted everything with, be it battle or conversation... he just didn't seem... human.

"If you would, Feizhi, could you please call Felix for me? I wish to update him on our progress."

Feizhi glanced up, afraid. She had never ventured toward him willingly, and she would no doubt have to disturb whatever it was he did when he was alone. Piers' casual smile eased her though, Felix did seem to ignore her more than anything. He would likely accept whatever news she had without a word and brush her off. She nodded to the Lemurian and turned to the cabin.

Quickly making her way through the ship, Feizhi passed by Jenna, who was staring at the sealed wine bottle in her hands with such sombre longing, and Kraden who was buried, or at least pretending to be, in his studies. Before the Xianese girl knew it, she was standing in front of the door to Felix's room, listening to the absolute silence of the ship. Swallowing, almost ready to retreat and ask Jenna to do it for her, Feizhi knocked on the door.

"Felix?" She called out hesitantly. After a few moments passed in silence, it was obvious the man had not heard her, *"Felix?"* She repeated, knocking again a few times, *"Piers wishes to speak with you."*

Still no sounds from beyond, no footsteps to indicate he was moving, no creaking to suggest furniture being moved, no rustles of cloth as he dressed himself, just complete silence. Wholly unsure of what her body was doing, but not stopping it, Feizhi found herself gently opening the door to the man's room, cautiously peeking in.

The room was dark, the porthole covered by some fabric to obscure the light. It was a mess, clothes and bottles littered the floor, the door causing clinks as it pushed many bottles aside, numerous liquid contents spilt and stained on the wood. The air was heavy, fully stale with the stench of alcohol, sweat, sorrow, and hatred. Feizhi coughed slightly,

not to gain his attention, but from the inability to breathe in this environment.

Taking steps in, being sure not to step on anything but the floor, Feizhi made her way toward a mass slumped over the bed. She strained her gaze, trying to find his face, only to find it still covered by his mask. Seemed no matter what he did he was always sure to return his face to its hidden state. He was huddled under some form of small purple blanket, which had a trail of beads sewn into its ends. It was far too small for him... didn't even seem designed for its current use.

"Felix?" She asked quietly, but no response prompted volume, *"Felix?"* Still nothing... Gently, Feizhi pressed a hand against his back, shaking him ever so slightly, *"Felix?"* A few spluttering coughs alerted her to withdraw her hand, *"Felix? Piers wis-"*

Within a moment she had been knocked back and Felix's sword was pointed straight at her neck, *"Get. Out."* His broken voice growled.

Feizhi complied, moving toward the door and nodding, *"Piers wishes to see-"*

"Get out!" He roared, shoving her with such force that she flew through the door and collided with the wall beyond it. Feizhi coughed slightly, hearing the man do the same much more raggedly behind the door he had just slammed.

"Piers wishes to see you, Felix!" She called beyond the door, greatly angered by the violent contact. Were she not a guest on this ship, she would have retaliated. Piers and Jenna would likely not forgive her for fighting back, but she promised that if Felix grew too accustomed to doing that she would take him down.

Straightening up, smoothing herself out after hitting the wall, she returned to the deck to be by Piers.

Don't do it, Jenna.

The scarlet haired girl caressed the glass bottle in her hands, feeling the liquid swirl around inside as she did. The sanguine liquid could so easily drown sorrows, it had done so for Felix, though he had turned to far stronger poisons in recent weeks. She found herself tempted day by day to just open the bottle and down the contents, to enter a blissful state of euphoria. She had seen a flipside to that though, sometimes it made people even more depressed, or angry... it seemed to do all that and more to her brother.

She put the bottle back onto the table, not where it had been originally, but she couldn't bring herself to stand to return it to its shelf. She knew she would be up again and holding it soon enough. For now, she took to staring at the liquid, trying her best to resist its allure, its promise to drown out her worries with its rich flavour. She had done it once... but Piers had chastised her when he had discovered it. She wasn't sure if Felix knew, if he even cared...

Jenna found herself scratching the table as she stared at the bottle, temptation nipping at the back of her mind, constantly urging her to uncork the bottle, to be rid of these horrible feelings and memories that plagued her waking hours and her dreams... her nightmares.

No... what would Piers think if she was caught again? What would Isaac think if he learned she had turned to such pathetic means of escaping her pain? What if... what if they didn't find out though? What if she could do this in secret, away from the prying eyes that would judge her for being

weak? Again, she found the bottle in her hands as she caressed the thick glass that contained wine from Piers' uncle.

She vaguely noted that Feizhi had waved to her as she descended the stairs to the bedrooms below. Her gaze was focused on the promises before her. The chance to forget for a short time, to have her horrible memories and thoughts just erased while she drank. She could escape it all... there would be no need for her to be sad.

Don't do it, Jenna...

Felix slumped against his door raggedly after slamming it, doing his best to regulate his breathing to its normal calm state, while the damn girl shouted something about Piers. A foul mixture of liquor, bile, and vomit was rising in his throat, threatening to splatter up against the wooden shield over his face. He swallowed, feeling the evil slide back down within him, as he began stumbling forward toward the dresser where a half emptied bottle awaited. No easier way to drown everything than with more...

He raised his mask just enough, blocking his vision, allowing his mouth access to the cool neck of the bottle that contained whatever potent mixture he had acquired from whatever cursed hamlet he found in this damned world. He coughed as the mixture burned its way down his throat, the warm, stale, tang of Alhafran ale. He lowered his mask as he downed another mouthful, staring into the cracked, grime-covered, mirror in front of him.

His mask stared back, the black holes of its eyes sucking him in, dragging him down deeper into this despair. It was what he deserved. He stared into the black abyss on his

face, paying no mind to their segmented form in the mirror. He allowed himself to be lost, swirling in the solid darkness. For just a second, it was *her* he was staring at.

He dropped. A hand catching his head as he nearly wept into the cool wood lying against him. He combed his hands back through his hair, tearing through knots and tangles that had formed since he had last bathed, with little care for the minor pain they caused him.

He stood up quickly, turning his back on the mirror, before grabbing the hilt of his sword at his belt and storming from his room with purpose. He quickly passed by his sister, who he noticed was trying to pretend she was not eyeing a bottle of Lemurian wine, and Kraden, ever buried in his fake studies.

"Piers!" He yelled as he burst into the fresh air of the sea, air that nearly flushed everything within him from his mouth, and strode toward the Mercury Adept and that blasted girl.

Both bodies by the wheel jumped instinctively, whirling about to see the masked man marching toward them, his ebony hair flying about him in the sea-breeze. Each step seemed to echo across the wooden panelling, channelling ripples through them into the two he advanced on. He eventually drew up to them, completely disregarding the green-eyed girl as he addressed Piers.

"What do you need?" He asked simply, his tones direct.

Piers took a cursory glance around before answering, *"We are about a week from the northern coast of Osenia, a day's travel from the southern Sea of Time inlet, and a day and a half from the coast near the Shrine of the Sea God where Obaba claimed we'd find the remaining fragment of the trident."* He answered easily, *"However, Kraden informs me*

that it would be wisest to dock at a beach on the southern coast of Osenia, directly south of Air's Rock, rather than land at its north and have to hike for a few weeks. It is two and a half weeks from where we are now."

There was silence for a moment before Felix nodded, *"Very well, I shall pilot us through the night to hasten this trip along."*

Piers shook his head, tightening his grip on the wheel, *"I think not, Felix. The seas are dangerous enough under the sun, at night it shall be far more dangerous. If you must insist though, I suggest you have someone watching over you."*

"Very well then." Felix replied, though it seemed a trained response used to end a conversation. As he turned away from Piers his mask stared into Feizhi again, as it always did whenever he saw her. He stared for a few moments, she returning the gaze uncomfortably as he does, before he turned on his heel and marched away again, presumably to rest for the night.

Why does he stare? Feizhi thought. She imagined him scowling with hate, holding back anger and harsh words behind that colourfully dark mask of his. She knew he wasn't at all fond of her presence here, but she didn't know what she had done to warrant such disdain. Maybe her desire to meet Isaac angered him seeing as they were past rivals, according to Jenna.

"You should try to get some rest, Feizhi." Piers spoke up, having returned to piloting while she was lost in her thoughts, *"Each of us will have to take a few hours through the night to guard him."*

She would have to guard him? With his aversion to her very presence? Was that even wise? She didn't question it, they had duties on this ship, they were all a team, and they all did them, though sometimes with a bit of complaint or persuasion. She stifled a sigh and nodded to Piers as he smiled to her, leaving his side and going back into the cabin, hoping that Felix wasn't there.

She smiled to Jenna as she entered, though the girl barely managed to return even a grin. The bottle she had been cradling had been taken from her and she was clearly in one of her moods. As soon as she had attempted to smile it was replaced by a very noticeable frown, still she walked past Feizhi and took over her shift guarding Piers. Feizhi tried to speak to Kraden, but he was similarly absorbed in his books, or pretending to be at least.

The girl sighed, shaking her head as she proceeded down the stairs and to her room. She quickly changed and climbed under her covers to wait for the wake-up call to go and protect Felix on deck.

Felix cursed under his breath as Piers informed him he would get Feizhi to work the first shift. He was sick of that girl quite frankly, it didn't matter where he was she always seemed to be nearby. His room seemed to be the only refuge from her presence, and even that had been defiled. It was becoming difficult to hold his tongue as she asked him a question or spoke to him. He did *not* want her here.

He had failed before.

"Hello, Felix." Her voice came from behind him.

He turned to find her, simply to ensure he was not slowly going mad. Sure enough, there she was, holding a torch in

her right hand which spilt its orange light around her and through the violet strands surrounding her face. She raised the torch up, hooking into one of the slots on the cabin wall to keep the light constant around them. As she did, the light shone across her eyes... those horribly *green* eyes.

He turned back, disgusted, fixing his eyes on the light being offered in front of them by one of Jenna's Djinn. Silence quickly settled across the deck, broken only by the lulling waves lapping the length of the ship. The rhythm was soothing, sobering, and Felix felt himself relaxing as he listened to them. He kept himself focused though, refusing to let the waves relax him to the point of being careless and defenceless.

Frankly, he didn't trust the girl's combat abilities. She could handle herself in battle, yes, but being able to fight and doing it effectively were two different things entirely. For one, the girl lacked the ability to properly utilise her Psynergy and she often resorted to whatever she called that technique she used despite the increased danger to her allies and herself. It was reckless and foolish and he was having trouble quietly tolerating it.

He shook his head, doing his best to turn his thoughts away from the green eyed girl.

I'll keep you safe...

Felix grunted, pain gripping his chest for a moment. He hunched over, lifting his mask from his face slightly, coughing in response to the thought. Worse still because of it, the girl was at his side now, her hands on his shoulder and side as he coughed. He turned away from her, insistent on hiding his face, fixing his mask despite the fact that he was still coughing.

"Felix?" She asked, her voice so full of concern, *"What is wrong? Are you hurt?"*

Only by your presence. He thought harshly. He pulled himself up to stand, only now realising that her hands were still holding onto him. They were soft. *"No."* He replied simply, shrugging out of her grip and seizing the wheel again.

"Be careful." She said quietly, retreating back to wherever she had been before rushing to his side.

A few more strangled breaths escaped before he recovered and stood up fully. He gripped the wheel tighter, straining the leather around his knuckles as he did. He felt bile rise in his throat as his thoughts again turned to the girl who had just rushed to his side. Being close to her made him impossibly uncomfortable... why did she have to be here? Why couldn't the others just agree with his plans to find a Jupiter Adept near the Lighthouse to use?

He didn't have a chance to dwell on the thought long, the girl in question called to him and he turned just in time to spy the monsters clambering over the rails. Needing to be quick because he could not be absent from the wheel for too long, Felix darted to his right to dispatch the few on board while the girl dealt with the others.

The monsters were surprisingly weak under his onslaught, quickly falling to his blade, before disintegrating and breaking into Psynenergetic dust. He threw his eyes to the other side where the girl was fighting. He was rather amazed to see only one monster left, which fell to a strike from her palms followed by a quick burst of electricity. As the final beast fell and its remaining energy melded to the two Adepts on board, Feizhi fell to her knees, staring at her

palms as the Psynergetic rings around her faded, which gently crackled with the waning energy she had just used.

Feizhi glanced up at Felix who was staring at her again, before he turned away and to the wheel, "*What was that?*" She asked, closing her hands, cutting off the flow of energy.

"*Psynergy.*" Felix responded harshly, "*Get used to it.*"

Feizhi looked back down at her hands, she had intended to use her Chi and instead her mind had allowed Psynergy to take hold. She wondered how best to take control... perhaps she needed sparring dummies to practice on rather than Piers' tutoring. Perhaps then she could differentiate the powers of Chi and Psynergy, use them both in tangent to speed their progress toward the Lighthouse and Isaac along.

She glanced around, there were no remnants of the beasts that had climbed aboard, their bodies had dissolved and some of it had melded to her. She still did not understand that, she had neglected asking each time. Why was it she would sometimes feel a surge of strength as she glowed with enemies' strength? Was this the life of an Adept? Sometimes she wondered if it had been wise to follow her vision.

She stood back up, stroking the golden ring she had intended to give to Isaac. She often thought of his trials as an Adept and future hero of the world, but was his quest as difficult as the group's she was currently part of. Somehow she doubted it. His group had been *together*, they had been happy and helpful regardless of anything they went through. She did not doubt that they may have had misunderstandings at times, but they seemed much more stable than what she was with.

Exhaling deeply, keeping a watchful eye around her, Feizhi began to train. It always helped her relieve stress or calm

down. Of course, meditation achieved this, but she could not enter that state and keep watch. She began the drills, stretching beforehand, as she began to practice her forms. As she moved, striking invisible foes, evading imaginary blows, she began to think. She did not want to try to use her Chi this time. She was a seasoned practitioner of the art, but Psynergy was new.

She breathed deep, *A power of mind*. She reminded herself, *Chi is of body. Psynergy of mind*. She began to focus, she did not need to physicalize a movement for Psynergy, she simply had to will it into being. Her element was Jupiter, of wind, storms, clouds, lightning, and thunder. That was her practice. She began to focus, *A small breeze*. She thought consistently, trying to conjure the wind.

She stood still, her eyes focusing ahead of her on Felix. *Pretend Felix is the enemy*. She told herself, giving herself incentive. She began to focus, then, with one fluid movement, she did her best to unleash the soft wind.

She was ecstatic to find the Psynesergetic colour of silvery-blue surround and pass her while Felix's hair gently whipped to the side. She was so overjoyed that she lost her focus and the breeze began to pick up. Startled, she quickly did her best to end it, relieved when the energy faded from around her, but not before Felix's attention had been caught.

"What do you think you are doing?" He yelled loudly, turning his body just enough to face her.

She shook, stammering slightly as she responded, *"Apologies, Felix. I was trying to use Psynergy. I did not mean harm."*

Felix grunted in casual disgust and amusement as he turned back to the Djinn lighting the way in front of him and

continued to sail. Feizhi returned to her training, deciding that now was not the best time to practice Psynergy.

The hours passed and soon Jenna came out on deck to relieve Feizhi of her duty. She smiled happily to her Valean friend, before rushing downstairs to return to her bed.

Jenna watched as the girl rushed off, before approaching her brother warily. His masked eyes were fixed on her Djinn highlighting the seas below them. She gently tapped him on the shoulder, afraid he would just whirl around with a strike at the contact. She was glad when that was not the case, but she did not even get any greeting from the man save for the turn.

"I brought some food, Felix." Jenna gestured to a small piece of meat she had seared before coming onto the deck.

Her brother took a cursory glance at the meat and took it wordlessly from his sister. He lifted his mask enough to expose his mouth for the food and quickly finished it. Jenna frowned, watching as her brother continued to hide his face from even her. She hadn't seen his face in so many months, not since the accident. He had been hiding himself since then. All she wanted was her brother back.

She wanted to see his kind green eyes reassure her again, she wanted him to hug her when she was scared like he used to. She wanted him to stop being so cruel. When the time came to explain to Isaac why they were doing this, she found it difficult to believe that Felix would, they would end up fighting. Everything could be so easy if they just waited for him to find them. They had seen evidence that Isaac and his group had been around, and had heard from several

towns that a group had come searching asking if anyone had seen Jenna.

She settled down on a bench against the cabin wall, watching her brother's form. She was surprised her brother had changed so drastically. After Mt. Aleph, his return, he had done all he could to become her brother again, to make up for the three years he had left her alone. He told stories of her parents being well in Prox, why they had not been allowed or capable of sending word to Vale. He reminded her of times from their childhood together when they played with Isaac and Garet. He had been so caring... until the *accident*...

Since then, she had not seen Felix at all. The man piloting the ship bore his likeness, and still hid much of that behind his mask, but it was not her brother. Still in blood, yes, but that was it. If ever he spoke to her, it was an order, or a warning. There were no kind words, nothing to express concern for her, nothing brotherly at all. Her brother had died after the accident, and this *shell* was all that remained of him. His will personified in his body to finish the quest.

The night was quiet, and Jenna found herself listening to the soothing sounds of the sea splashing against the ship. She found herself being lulled to sleep, something that was more than welcomed. She could not remember the last time she had slept.

Jenna was awoken suddenly by sickening cries of pain and the sounds of Psynergy. Jumping from the seat she found monsters already aboard and Felix dealing with them. Drawing her staff, the Mars Adept unleashed a Beam into the nearest monster before channelling a quick Aura into Felix. Within minutes the siblings had dispatched the monsters on

board and Jenna relaxed, smiling to herself, before Felix rounded on her.

"What were you doing!?" He yelled loudly.

Jenna shuddered, seeking to find some distance between herself and this man, *"S-sorry, Felix. I was tired."*

"Then go get some sleep." Felix ordered, *"You'll get killed otherwise."* The words struck a chord deep within the young Valean girl.

"I can't sleep, Felix!" Jenna cried as her brother turned his back on her, *"I haven't been able to sleep since what happened! You might be able to! You might be able to make it through each day by drinking and passing out, but I can't do that, Felix! I don't know what to do with myself! Every time I close my eyes I see her, and the guilt stops me from sleeping! I can count on one hand the amount of hours I've slept since then. That does not include being knocked out, poisoned, passing out, or having nightmares. If you think it was hard on you, how do you think I feel!? I lost you that day too!"*

Jenna sank to her knees, allowing the tears flowing down her cheeks to patter against the wooden panels beneath her. She couldn't stop herself, the tears were running faster than she could beat them away, and the exhaustion had taken her legs from beneath her.

"Go get some sleep." Felix ordered, *"Piers will take the shifts until morning."*

Jenna forced herself back up, finding her brother's back still turned on her. She advanced on him at the wheel, grabbing his shoulder and forcefully turning him around before

driving her tear-wet fist into his gut. The man coughed and doubled over from the force of the punch.

"Don't you give a fucking damn about me anymore, Felix?" She screamed in his ear, driving a fist down onto his back as the man continued to cough, *"I pour my heart out to you and you just tell me to get some goddamned sleep? What the hell is wrong with you!?"*

Her brother didn't respond, he just continued to cough under her assault, before she eventually tired and delivered on final kick into his stomach before running off, wiping the tears from her eyes. She hurried down through the ship, not bothering to wake Piers before she burst into her room, locked the door, and hid under her covers, crying.

I hate him. She cried, burying her face into the surrounding fabric allowing it to absorb even more of the salty moisture which she shed, *I hate him so much.*

Light slowly found its way into Piers' sleeping eyes, light that quickly woke him up. He was supposed to be up before dawn. He jumped from his bed quickly, grabbing his long coat and sword before hurrying out onto the deck. All was silent as he rushed out save for the sound of the sea, and as he reached the deck, Felix was standing still by the wheel. Piers would have believed all was well if not for the small streams of blood running over the wooden panels of his ship.

"Felix?" Piers called out as he advanced on the leader.

The man did not answer, instead just tightening his grip on the wheel, waiting for Piers to come to his side as he knew he would. Nothing he said would have stopped his advance, so he didn't bother trying.

"What happened? Why was I not woken by Jenna?" Piers asked as he came up to the man's side, examining his condition. His clothes had several tears throughout, tears that revealed faint cuts healed by Venus Psynergy.

Felix's gaze tilted only slightly toward Piers, *"I sent her to bed hours ago. She has been having difficulty sleeping. She was not capable of keeping watch."*

"And you felt it better to continue alone rather than have her wake me?" Piers stated as he grabbed Felix's arm, running some healing Psynergy over a few cuts he had seen were healed ineffectively, possibly infected or poisoned wounds beyond what Felix's Psynergy could handle.

Felix did not respond in any way, he did not even remove his arm from Piers' grip. He just continued to pilot the ship toward their destination in Osenia. Piers narrowed his eyes, his gaze moving from the cuts he was dealing with to the black screens of Felix's mask. He stared into the shades doing his best to fix his gaze on Felix's eyes. Apparently they were brown, according to Jenna.

Felix turned the emotionless screen on his face to Piers, returning the intense stare easily. Piers imagined his gaze was far steelier than he could ever achieve, a look of loss and hatred that he could never hope to understand, focused entirely into his own yellow eyes. Piers threw Felix's arm from his grip as he finished, but he did not falter in the penetrating glare they held to each other.

"Why did you not tell me of Jenna's sleeping troubles? Why have you not helped her?" Piers questioned, being sure to keep his face as solid as possible as he stared at the coloured screen of Felix's face.

"It is none of your business or any of mine. If Jenna does not wish to discuss what ails her that is her choice." Felix answered simply, keeping the black screens fixed right onto Piers' golden eyes.

Piers refused to break the challenge first, staring into the black which reflected nothing, *"It seems that runs in the family."* Piers responded harshly, *"Though, unlike you, I imagine Jenna will be more receptive to the offer of help."*

"Hmph." Felix grunted uncaringly, breaking the stare at last and returning his gaze to the seas stretching all around them.

Pier shook his head, taking steps away from the man, but remaining on deck until the others began to wake from their sleep. He stood, leaning against the cabin wall, his eyes fixed squarely on Felix's back. Of all the months together he could still not understand what had happened to the man to turn him into what he had been. Jenna had told him he had been like he was up until a few months ago. She had yet to detail a time or any details, but it was clear something had happened to scar him, her, and Kraden.

He fell back on the belief that someone had died, someone very close to them. He could understand sorrow, grief, and anger, for such a tragedy, but he could not understand how it would last like this. How important had this person been to him? Why did it hurt him so?

Piers found his thoughts turn to his mother. He wondered if she was okay. She was never the strongest person, not even Lemurian medicine or ancient secrets from the Golden Age could help her. King Hydros had done everything he could to improve her quality of life when he had taken Piers on as his vassal, yet to no avail. Piers hoped his sudden

disappearance did not weigh too heavily on her. He would hate to cause her that pain... but, surely she knew he was alright. She knew he could handle himself.

Time passed, the sun reaching higher into the sky. Piers and Felix fought off several monster attacks in that time, but remained entirely silent. They said nothing to each other, not even during battle to warn the other, or afterwards when they were healing. They just stayed silent, occasionally locking the other in a glare. Eventually the time came when Kraden and Feizhi came on deck, which signalled Felix's time as pilot was up.

The man pushed past all of them, returning to his quarters. Piers shook his head, dropping the anchor, and went to help Kraden prepare breakfast.

That's chapter two.

Thoughts?

Well, thanks for reading, and, hopefully, reviewing.

And thanks to anyone who has or will favourite or follow as well!

Until next time, guys and gals,

Your friend and writer,

Droory